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1981/06/04

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SECRETARY'S TALKING POINTS: TAIWAN

Objective: To reach a modus vivendi on the Taiwan issue including the parameters of our unofficial relationship and arms sales, while seeking China's reaffirmation of its resolve to use only peaceful methods to settle the issue.

FRAMEWORK

-- THE US IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE FRAMEWORK OF RELATIONS EMBODIED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF JANUARY 1, 1979, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THE PRESIDENT AND ALL MEMBERS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT THIS COMMITMENT.

-- OUR DEALINGS WITH TAIWAN WILL REMAIN IN THE UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS WHICH WERE ESTABLISHED AFTER NORMALIZATION.

-- THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT (TRA) WAS NECESSARY UNDER OUR SYSTEM TO ESTABLISH THE LEGAL BASIS FOR UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS. WHEN WE SPEAK OF IMPLEMENTING THE TRA WE ARE NOT IN ANY SENSE CONTRADICTING THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE. WE WILL IMPLEMENT THE TRA IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE.

PRC-TAIWAN

-- WE ARE AWARE OF CHINA'S STATED INTENTION TO USE ONLY PEACEFUL MEANS TO RESOLVE THE TAIWAN PROBLEM, AND PRESIDENT REAGAN APPRECIATED AMBASSADOR CHAI'S REASSURANCE ON THIS POINT.

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RDS-3 6/4/01

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IS/FPC/CDR

Date: 12/5/96

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FOIA Exemptions

MR Cases Only:
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-- WE HAVE NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE CONTINUED REDUCTION OF TENSIONS IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT AND HOPE THAT THE PRC WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT.

-- WE ALSO WELCOME THOSE FORMS OF INDIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE MAINLAND AND TAIWAN WHICH HAVE EVOLVED IN RECENT YEARS, FOR EXAMPLE, INDIRECT TRADE, CASUAL OVERSEAS CONTACTS AND OCCASIONAL TRAVEL. WE HOPE THAT SUCH CONTACTS MAY EVOLVE FURTHER.

-- WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS DESIRABLE OR APPROPRIATE FOR US TO TAKE A DIRECT ROLE IN PROMOTING SUCH CONTACTS OR IN BROKERING A SOLUTION TO THE TAIWAN PROBLEM. THAT IS SOMETHING WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT WITH TAIPEI.

U.S. ARMS SALES

-- AT THE TIME OF NORMALIZATION, THE U.S. INDICATED THAT IT WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO TAIWAN CERTAIN CAREFULLY SELECTED DEFENSIVE WEAPONS. WE HAVE DONE THIS -- BEARING IN MIND THAT THE PRC IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO SUCH SALES -- BOTH FOR POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC REASONS.

-- POLITICALLY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES WOULD NOT HAVE TOLERATED A TOTAL CUT-OFF OF ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN, WHOSE PEOPLE HAVE FOR SO LONG BEEN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH US.

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-- STRATEGICALLY, IT WOULD SERVE NEITHER US NOR PRC
INTERESTS TO DRIVE TAIWAN TO DESPERATION.

-- WE MUST THEREFORE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CERTAIN ITEMS TO
TAIWAN. OUR PURPOSE IS NOT TO REINTRODUCE TENSIONS INTO THE
TAIWAN STRAIT. ON THE CONTRARY, THE PRESENT LOW LEVEL OF
TENSIONS PERMITS US TO EXAMINE TAIWAN'S REQUESTS MORE
CAUTIOUSLY.

-- ON THE QUESTION OF AN ADVANCED FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, NO
DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AND NONE IS EXPECTED BEFORE THE END OF
THIS YEAR. DURING 1982, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO
MAKE NEW SALES OF AIRCRAFT TO TAIWAN AS EXISTING AIRCRAFT
BECOME OBSOLETE OR WEAR OUT.

MUTUAL SENSITIVITIES

-- BOTH THE U.S. AND CHINA MUST APPROACH THE TAIWAN ISSUE
WITH PRUDENCE AND RESTRAINT. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS ISSUE IS
ACUTELY SENSITIVE IN CHINA. IT IS ALSO SENSITIVE IN THE
UNITED STATES. YOU ARE AWARE THAT SOME AMERICANS FEEL THAT
THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SEVERED RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN WAS

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UNNECESSARILY HARSH AND ABRUPT. WE VALUE OLD FRIENDS, AS CHINA DOES, AND WE PLAN TO DEAL WITH TAIWAN IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER. BUT THIS WILL NOT AFFECT THE UNOFFICIAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH U.S.-TAIWAN CONTACTS ARE HANDLED.

-- IN THIS CONTEXT, I SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE LEGAL AUTHORITY AND DOES NOT SEEK TO LIMIT EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION OR CONTACTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS.

-- WE STRONGLY URGE THAT CHINA TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND DEEDS, NOT CASUAL REMARKS BY PRIVATE U.S. CITIZENS OR BY CITY OR STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS -- AND EVEN OCCASIONALLY BY FEDERAL OFFICIALS -- WHICH MAY NOT REPRESENT OFFICIAL U.S. POLICY. WE NEED CHINA'S TOLERANCE ON THIS DIFFICULT ISSUE, AND ITS TRUST THAT WE WILL KEEP OUR WORD.

-- AS A PART OF THIS TOLERANCE, WE FEEL THAT THE LESS PUBLICITY ABOUT THE TAIWAN PROBLEM THE BETTER. WE DO NOT SEEK ANY PUBLICITY. OBVIOUSLY WE CANNOT PREVENT TAIPEI FROM CLAIMING THAT THERE IS MORE GOING ON THAN THERE REALLY IS. BUT WE URGE THAT CHINA NOT OVERREACT TO TAIWAN PRESS STORIES, WHICH MAY BE INTENTIONALLY SELF-SERVING OR INTENTIONALLY DISRUPTIVE OF CLOSE US-CHINA TIES.

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